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ABSTRACT

This special report examines the labor movement's growing interest in benefits that help two-income families and single parents. The report also: (1) examines benefits that unions have won for their members and employers' reactions to labor's increasing advocacy on behalf of working parents; (2) profiles the results of union activism for work and family benefits around the country; and (3) discusses union strategies for winning work and family benefits. Included in the report are case studies of union organizing activities and outcomes at Harvard University, and among New York state employees, postal workers, Colorado grocery workers, and Santa Clara County, California employees. The appendix contains the text of family care provisions of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company's collective bargaining agreement with its two largest unions, the Communications Workers of America and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, which some observers say will open the door for other unions seeking family benefits. Annotated citations of the Bureau of National Affairs' special report series on work and families, numbers 1-19, are provided. (RH)

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Special Report #20 August 1989

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Special Report #20

Work and Family and Unions: Labor's Agenda for the 1990s

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INTRODUCTION

Signs of organized labor's increasing interest in work and family issues are everywhere.

In fact, work and family concerns may become the dominant issue of the 1990s for the American labor movement, as unions seek to address the concerns of the growing proportion of female union members and their male co-workers. Among the key developments:

In fact, work and family concerns may become the dominant issue of the 1990s for the American labor movement...

- In May 1989, the Communication Workers of America (CWA) reached agreement with the American Telephone and Telegraph Co. on what both sides described as a "breakthrough" contract providing increased child care benefits, more leave for family problems, reimbursement for adoption expenses, and a host of other work and family benefits.
- The same month, the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), the AFL-CIO, and the Department of Labor sponsored seven regional conferences entitled "Bargaining For Our Families," in which union representatives around the nation discussed techniques to bargain and lobby for work and family benefits.
- CLUW and several unions also recently sponsored an "American Family Celebration" in Washington, D.C., to highlight union interest in work and family issues. The AFL-CIO followed that event with "Children's Day on the Hill" to lobby Congress for passage of two pieces of work and family legislation. Thousands of working parents and their children took part in the event.
- Earlier this year, the AFL-CIO created an "Ad Hoc Committee On The Needs Of The Working Family" comprising top leaders from nine major unions, to increase support for federal work and family legislation and to help affiliates bargain for family benefits.

From child care to elder care, an increasing number of unions, weary of what they feel is inaction by employers and the federal government, are bargaining for work and family benefits to satisfy

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member demands and to attract new members, according to labor representatives and analysts interviewed by BNA.

Work and family concerns now are among the top priorities of most unions, along with traditional issues such as salaries and working conditions.

High Priority Item

"Unions are getting the message and getting on this particular bandwagon," David B. Lipsky, dean of Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations, told BNA. "This is the kind of issue unions can capitalize on."

"The child care issue is likely to be accorded an increasingly higher priority on the collective bargaining agenda," DOL said in its April 1988 report, *Child Care: A Workforce Issue*. "This will be due to labor intensifying its efforts to meet a growing membership need as well as management becoming more appreciative of the economic dividends of investments in child care assistance."

From the smallest local to the largest international, many unions – hit hard by dwindling memberships and contract concessions in recent years – are flexing their muscles at the bargaining table and in the political arena to provide their members benefits to ease tensions between work and family life.

"Unions are getting the message and getting on this particular bandwagon...This is the kind of issue unions can capitalize on."

Family Issues Help Revive Unions

Unions, whose membership as a percentage of the labor force has shrunk in recent years, may be revived by their efforts on behalf of work and family issues as the nation's changing demographics bring more women and minorities into the workforce, labor analysts suggest.

"This is a very strong union issue. This is the issue of the '90s in a lot of ways," Lipsky told BNA.

"Child care and pay equity are the labor issues of our time," added Kristine Rondeau, an organizer with the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers at Harvard University. "They're not just women's issues, they're everybody's issues."

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But unions have their work cut out for them in successfully negotiating for work and family benefits as the 1990s begin, a recent BNA survey of 250 employers found.

Widespread Resistance

Although many employers have adopted parental leave policies, there is widespread resistance to negotiating more-costly work and family benefits, such as child care assistance...

Although many employers have adopted parental leave policies, there is widespread resistance to negotiating more-costly work and family benefits, such as child care assistance, BNA found in a survey of employer bargaining objectives for 1990, conducted in the summer of 1989.

Only 8 percent—or 19—of companies surveyed provide some type of child care assistance under contracts with unions. Another 8 percent plan to negotiate such a benefit in 1990, the survey found.

In contrast, almost 75 percent of the companies surveyed provide maternity leave in contracts, while 12 percent have paternity leave provisions.

Five employers said they wanted to add maternity benefits next year, while 10 said they would seek provisions for paternity leave.

Twelve of the employers surveyed said they had elder care provisions in their contracts, and another 11 said they were willing to negotiate that item in 1990, the survey found.

Despite these low figures, data indicate that unions are making progress in securing work and family benefits. A similar survey of 215 companies by BNA for 1988 found that sixty-seven percent of employers had maternity leave provisions, while just four had some type of child care assistance program.

Increased Union Activism

The labor movement will increase its activities in the work and family area as more women continue to join its ranks and employers become more aware of the importance of providing family benefits to attract and retain workers, the DOL report predicted.

"Union members, not only mothers of young children but also men in dual-earner families, have become increasingly vocal in expressing concern about affordable child care, and their interest in

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the opportunity for solutions available through the collective bargaining process.

"Certainly, with women workers nearly half the labor force and concentrated in areas where unions are not heavily represented, the appeal of child care issues is particularly strong," DOL said.

Work and family concerns also have moved to the top of unions' legislative agenda. Unions have launched major lobbying campaigns for measures such as the Parental and Medical Leave Act and the Act for Better Child Care Services.

This special report examines the labor movement's growing voice for benefits that help two-income families and single parents. It also examines benefits that unions have won for their members and how employers have reacted to labor's increasing advocacy on behalf of working parents.

Results of Union Activism

In addition, the report profiles the results of union activism for work and family benefits around the country, including:

- A 24-hour on-site day care center in Syracuse, N.Y., organized by the American Postal Workers Union, the first such pilot center under an agreement reached with the U.S. Postal Service.
- AFSCME's successful attempt to organize workers at Harvard over the lack of affordable child care services.
- The extensive child care network in New York state launched by an agreement between the state and the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA). Thirty-nine day-care centers have been established under the agreement, and at least a dozen more are planned.
- A before- and after-school day care center won by Local 715 of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) in negotiations with Santa Clara County, Calif.
- The establishment of the first union-operated day care center by a Colorado labor union.

The report also discusses union strategies to win work and family benefits. The appendix includes the text of family care provisions of

Unions have launched major lobbying campaigns for measures such as the Parental and Medical Leave Act and the Act for Better Child Care Services.

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the AT&T-CWA contract that some observers say will open the door for other unions seeking family benefits.

This special report is the 20th in a series produced by the BNA Special Projects Unit. Drew Douglas, managing editor for special projects, supervised the report. Steven Teske, staff editor, researched and wrote this report. Mark Williams and Roger Feinthel served as copy editors, and staff researcher Loretta Kotzin served as production editor.

Statistical information on employer bargaining objectives for 1990 was provided by BNA's Collective Bargaining Negotiations and Contracts in conjunction with BNA's Surveys Unit.

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UNION EFFORTS

At least 12 major national unions, from the male-dominated United Steel Workers (USW) to the predominantly female SEIU, have bargained for child care and other work and family benefits, DOL said in its May 1988 report. Scores of union locals also have joined the fight for increases in such benefits.

Self-Preservation Goal

Unions are seeking new and expanded work and family benefits because of changing workforce demographics and their desire for self-preservation, experts told BNA. They said many employers are offering such benefits as a result of the same factors.

"I think the unions are going after [family benefits] for the same reasons businesses are: recruitment," Dana Friedman, co-president of the Families and Work Institute, told BNA.

Bargaining for work and family benefits "is an obligation unions have to their members," Mary Kay Derby, a New York state worker with two children in an Albany day care center negotiated by a state employees union, told BNA. "Day care costs are getting unbelievable."

Bargaining for work and family benefits "is an obligation unions have to their members...Day care costs are getting unbelievable."

Changing Demographics

More than 70 percent of women age 25 to 34 were working in 1988, compared with just 35 percent in 1950, according to the Labor Department. By the year 2000, more than 61 percent of all women will be working. Sixty percent of the new entrants into the labor force between 1986 and the turn of the century will be women, the department predicted.

"The current high level of attention to child care is a direct result of new workforce trends," the department report said. "Although child care has traditionally been regarded as a social issue or a welfare matter, the greatest number of parents now likely to require child care are, in fact, working people."

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Major Victory at AT&T

The latest major victory for organized labor concerning the work and family issues occurred in May 1989, when the CWA and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) reached a contract agreement under which AT&T provides a vast array of work and family benefits.

A new "excused work day" allowing employees to take up to two hours off on short notice for personal reasons also will be tested for a year, the contract states.

The contract, which covers 175,000 workers, includes a jointly administered $5 million Family Care Development Fund to support the development of child care facilities and programs for workers' elderly relatives. The agreement also includes a new family-leave policy that allows employees to take up to one year of unpaid leave to care for seriously ill family members, including parents over age 60. Employees who take such leave will be guaranteed reinstatement with no loss of seniority.

The contract also includes a pretax dependent-care program, and it extends from six months to one year the maximum unpaid leave to care for a newborn or adopted child, with guaranteed reinstatement to the same or an equivalent job.

The company for the first time also will reimburse employees up to $2,000 for expenses associated with adoption of a child. A new "excused work day" allowing employees to take up to two hours off on short notice for personal reasons also will be tested for a year, the contract states.

No large union previously had been successful in making child care a major subject of negotiations, union representatives say, adding that a family-care package such as that negotiated by CWA and IBEW never has been included in a major union agreement.

Agreement Eases Worker Tensions

Union and AT&T officials hailed the agreement as a major step forward for easing worker tensions about work and family, and AFL-CIO officials say the pact could set the stage for a more concerted drive by organized labor for family care, in negotiations and through legislation pending in Congress.

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"Wages, pensions, and working conditions always are issues in bargaining and always are resolved," AT&T Vice President Raymond Williams said when the settlement was announced. "But in these negotiations AT&T was committed to achieve breakthroughs in family issues and we are pleased we met those objectives." Fifty-three percent of AT&T's workforce are women.

Labor may be able to capitalize on this trend by trying to organize workers in industries that employ mostly women, experts told BNA. For example, only 13 percent of the nation's technical, sales, and administrative-support personnel was unionized in 1988, DOL says.

"I think the prospects are pretty good right now for unions increasing membership because of changing demographics," Lipsky of Cornell told BNA. Only 3,300 of 44,000 U.S. companies employing 100 or more workers in 1988 offered some form of child care assistance, according to the Conference Board.

The debate over child care was a central issue in the formation of a union at Harvard University.

Child Care Issue Aided Labor

The debate over child care was a central issue in the formation of a union at Harvard University.

Propelled by complaints that child care at the university was expensive and oversubscribed, AFSCME spent $500,000 over two years organizing 3,700 white-collar workers – 83 percent of them women – as the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers.

The union and the university reached an agreement in June 1989 that provides $150,000 in child care subsidies to help Harvard workers pay for child care, eight to 24 weeks of paid maternity leave, one week of paid vacation for new fathers, and other work and family benefits.

Unions are not reacting only to the concerns of women when they take work and family issues to the bargaining table. Men also are beginning to seek more job flexibility and options to help care for their children, union members say.

The USW reached a contract agreement with Bethlehem Steel Corp. in May 1989 that allows male and female workers an unpaid 30-day leave of absence to care for a new baby or an ill family mem-

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ber. The union—whose membership is 90 percent males—had no family leave provision prior to the contract, and it says it will use the agreement as the foundation for winning future work and family benefits.

"It's important for us to keep up with the changing workforce," USW spokeswoman Marsha Zakowski told BNA. "We're well aware of that."

Widespread Union Involvement

Almost every major union has become involved in work and family issues, from the United Auto Workers and the USW to the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) and the International Ladies Garment Union (ILGWU), according to DOL.

They have won agreements that include labor-management work and family committees; resource and referral programs to help workers locate high-quality child care and elder care; the inclusion of child care in flexible benefit packages; pretax child care salary reductions; flexitime; and alternative work schedules, DOL said in its report.

"These accomplishments signal an emerging, and in all likelihood, irreversible trend toward the acknowledgement of child care as a core rather than a peripheral concern..."

"These accomplishments signal an emerging, and in all likelihood, irreversible trend toward the acknowledgement of child care as a core rather than a peripheral concern of [labor and management]; the acceptance of child care as a legitimate matter for negotiation at the bargaining table and for cooperative problem-solving outside of formal collective bargaining; and the realization that the invention of constructive solutions can be beneficial to management as well as labor," the DOL report said.

Unions report a mixture of successes and failures in bargaining for certain types of family benefits, especially those that employers think will cost a lot of money, such as on-site child care.

"Business isn't falling all over itself on these issues yet, and the one they choke on is on-site day care," Ann Hoffman, director of the professional and clerical employees division at ILGWU, said.

Nevertheless, business increasingly realizes that it must provide benefits that help attract and retain female workers, union representatives and labor analysts told BNA. The National Association of

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Manufacturers (NAM), for example, urges its members to "actively seek innovative solutions to the problems of working parents."

"Increasing numbers of working parents with young children pose new human resource challenges," NAM's policy statement on the subject says. "Pressure from balancing family with job responsibilities weighs heavily on working parents."

CLUW Executive Director Sandy Pope told BNA that unions usually begin negotiating for work and family policies that cost employers little, such as parental and sick leave. Then they seek a labor-management child-care committee or a referral program; dependent care programs; a child care voucher system; and, finally, on-site child care.

Legislative Efforts

Not content with what they can win at the bargaining table, unions also have taken their fight for work and family benefits to Congress.

Not content with what they can win at the bargaining table, unions also have taken their fight for work and family benefits to Congress.

Most of the nation's major unions have worked hard for several years to get Congress to pass parental leave and child care legislation, and union officials say getting such measures through Congress is a top priority.

Labor has been lobbying for passage of the Act for Better Child Care (S 5), which would provide $1.75 billion in fiscal 1990 to increase the supply of child care; and the Family and Medical Leave Act (S 345), which would require employers with 20 or more workers to provide up to 10 weeks of unpaid leave to the parents of a newborn or newly adopted child.

"Organized labor has defined the child care problem primarily as a public policy issue and has actively campaigned for the enactment of comprehensive legislation and enhanced government funding," the DOL report observed.

Because more women are entering the workforce and companies are continuing to feel the pressure of increased international competition, employers probably will be more willing to work with unions in the coming years to adopt work and family programs, experts told BNA.

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The struggle for workplace child care and other work and family benefits will occur at one employer and then another..., "until it becomes part of the culture."

Labor Activism

Nevertheless, labor officials say that without their activism many parents still would be without the benefits they need to ease the stress caused by work and family conflicts.

"We are the only group that is leading the fight for child care," Rondeau told BNA. The struggle for workplace child care and other work and family benefits will occur at one employer and then another, she added, "until it becomes part of the culture."

Winning support for work and family benefits has not been easy for unions. They often must convince their own members – as well as employers and the community – that such benefits are important, union advocates told BNA.

Varied Strategies

Unions have adopted numerous strategies to win work and family provisions in contracts, from convincing employers that such programs benefit them to jettisoning the traditional adversarial labor/management relationship and replacing it with cooperative decision making. Many also build neighborhood coalitions and work with the media to obtain community support.

"Planning and implementing a program of child care services at or through the workplace is not a simple task," AFSCME says in "Negotiating About Child Care: Issues and Options."

"The initiative and push will probably have to come from the union. It is a process that will require a major commitment of work and perseverance. A very persuasive and strong case will have to be made to both employees and the employer if a program is to be successfully implemented," the AFSCME report advises.

Conferences and Seminars

Because work and family issues are a new subject for many union leaders, especially older males, some unions are holding conferences and seminars to help their representatives understand members' needs and learn how to bargain for family benefits.

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The CLUW in May 1989 sponsored "Bargaining for Our Families," a series of one-day regional conferences on work and family issues for union representatives.

The sessions covered such topics as the types of work and family programs that workers often want and how to set priorities for them; developing member outreach programs; developing coalitions with organizations that have similar interests; working with the media; and lobbying legislatures for laws that provide money and programs in the area of work and family.

"There is no better way to prepare for successful bargaining, community or media outreach than to reach out to our own members," CLUW said in a report prepared at the close of the conferences.

Programs for Young and Old

Union representatives must be especially careful to make sure they negotiate for programs that will help younger and older members alike, to keep support high for such initiatives, Pope told BNA. A dependent care plan, as opposed to a child care plan, can appeal to members with aging parents that need care in addition to those who have children, she said.

Before contract negotiations begin, many unions survey their members—sometimes with management support—to determine their needs and to make sure the union speaks with a united voice on child care and other work and family issues, labor officials explain.

Employer opposition to work and family initiatives "can become entrenched if management perceives that the union membership is not unified on the issue or that the issue is of secondary importance to the membership," AFSCME warned in its bargaining guide.

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Importance of Surveys

Surveys often are designed to determine such facts as how much members pay for child care and how often they use it; what they do when their children become ill during the work week; how difficult it is to find good child care; and the most popular types of child care and/or elder care.

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In addition to providing valuable information, surveys also indicate to union members which types of benefits they can seek in negotiations, union representatives say.

"A lot of times members have no idea they can even bargain" for work and family benefits, Pope of CLUW told BNA. "They think [collective bargaining is] restricted to wages and health" benefits.

Cooperation With Management

After the survey results are tabulated, many unions establish committees—often in cooperation with management—to study work and family issues further. Sometimes such committees are created as a result of negotiations.

Such cooperation with management is occurring with increasing frequency in the labor movement, and it is especially effective with regard to work and family issues because both sides can benefit from child care and similar programs, Lipsky offered.

The committees give unions a legitimate forum to discuss work and family issues and they often enable unions to learn which managers are sympathetic to their efforts in this field, Pope said.

"Low-level management people are our natural allies here," she said.

Labor-management committees also allow parents to help determine what type of work and family programs are negotiated, and this is an important consideration given the importance parents put on having their children in the best day care possible, Pope added.

"If there's an adversarial relationship, it's best to go for dependent care plans or vouchers" so workers can retain the freedom to choose the type of care their children receive, she said.

"A lot of times members have no idea they can even bargain" for work and family benefits..."They think [collective bargaining is] restricted to wages and health" benefits.

Cost Considerations

During negotiations, employers sometimes hesitate to approve contracts that include work and family benefits because they think they will cost too much, Pope continued. Management may offer higher salaries in exchange for not expanding benefits, a move that may tempt union negotiators "to just give up" their pursuit of work and family programs and policies, Pope added.

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"You have to have a commitment to carrying through" for work and family benefits, Pope said.

Some benefits, such as leave without pay for the birth of a child, are relatively easy to bargain for because they cost employers little, union representatives said. "No one has ever asked for a parental leave benefit back," Geri Palast, political and legislative director of SEIU, told BNA.

Give-and-Take Process

Employers can be persuaded to adopt other benefits through the give-and-take process common to negotiations. Diana Rock, director of AFSCME's women's rights department, told BNA that negotiators may ask for a smaller salary hike to increase employer interest in costly work and family benefits.

"The employer will cost out" benefits such as child care, forcing the union to compromise in other areas of negotiations, Rock said.

After a new contract goes into effect, unions should keep track of the successes and failures of work and family programs so they can strive to improve them and prepare for the next round of contract talks, according to "Babies and Bargaining: Working Parents Take Action," a guidebook on negotiating for family benefits published by the Arnold M. Dubin Labor Education Center at Southeastern Massachusetts University.

Some benefits, such as leave without pay for the birth of a child, are relatively easy to bargain for because they cost employers little, union representatives said.

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CASE STUDY: Harvard University

The Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW) was established because many working parents at Harvard University needed affordable, quality child care.

In perhaps the first large-scale organizing effort in the nation in which the lack of affordable child care was a prime issue, AFSCME in May 1988 became the representative of the prestigious school's 3,700 clerical and technical workers, many of whom say they cannot afford the high prices charged by the university's seven child care centers.

The contract contains a host of work and family benefits, including a $150,000 fund to help members pay for child care...

The union and the university reached agreement in June 1989 on a three-year contract that provides child care subsidies and longer maternity leaves, in addition to a 32 percent salary increase. Ninety-four percent of the union's members approved the pact, which took effect July 1.

The contract contains a host of work and family benefits, including a $150,000 fund to help members pay for child care; eight weeks maternity leave at 70 percent of pay, with an option of up to four months more of paid leave with a doctor's approval; and "new-baby week," which allows fathers to take a paid week's leave after the birth or adoption of a child.

The union and the university also will establish a model on-site child care center, and the contract increases from three to nine the number of paid sick-leave days workers can use each year to care for ill family members.

In addition, the union and the university jointly will survey union members to determine what they think are the best ways to meet their future child care needs.

Workers 'Ecstatic' Over New Conract

"Our members are ecstatic about the agreement," Rondeau told BNA. She said that in addition to helping many union members who need child care, the child care fund and the center will spur the sur-

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rounding community to find solutions to the problem of caring for children during work hours.

"We believe that huge numbers of women are in the workforce now permanently," Rondeau added. "The workplace must be transformed to accommodate that fact."

The vote was close and expensive. The union won the election 1,530 to 1,486 after a two-year organizing drive that cost AFSCME $500,000, Rondeau told BNA. Harvard contested the election to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), claiming its employees were "intimidated and coerced" into joining the union, she said, but the NLRB ruled against the claim in October 1988.

Affordable Child Care

She said the union is "very serious about doing something important" to help provide the affordable child care that the university and surrounding area currently lack. "It's impossible to have anywhere near a normal life given the stress of having children" and working, Rondeau added.

Many authorities consider Harvard a pioneer in child care, having opened its first center in the early 1970s. However, some of the school's seven centers charge as much as $680 a month per child, according to Judy Walker, the university's child care adviser. The seven centers can accommodate a total of 320 children, but each has a long waiting list, Walker said.

Because of the high cost, the centers are used primarily by faculty members and other professional university employees. They are too expensive for most union members, who earn an average $18,000 a year, Rondeau said.

Most of the parents in HUCTW take their children to other centers, leave them with relatives, or bring their children to work with them, she explained.

"A lot of parents at Harvard spend a lot of time worrying about the care [their children] receive," she said.

For example, Roxana Breckner, a staff assistant in the architecture department, told BNA that finding care for her daughter Ariana since she was born two years ago has been a "nightmare."

"We believe that huge numbers of women are in the workforce now permanently...The workplace must be transformed to accommodate that fact."

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The care Ariana receives is good, but Breckner wants her daughter to attend an on-site center, and Harvard has told her that its centers have a 1½-year waiting list.

"I've had a very, very difficult experience the past 1½ years," she said. "There really is nothing out there."

Breckner, who has been employed at Harvard for seven years, brought her parents from Bolivia for three months to help care for her daughter, and her brother also helps occasionally. "It's either that or I lose my job," she said.

For the past several months Ariana has been cared for in a family home while her mother was at work. This care cost Breckner $125 a week. The care Ariana receives is good, but Breckner wants her daughter to attend an on-site center, and Harvard has told her that its centers have a 1½-year waiting list.

Off-Campus Child Care

Details of the child care subsidy the Harvard union won in negotiations were unavailable at press time, but Rondeau said the money will not be enough to allow HUCTW's members to use Harvard's centers. Most members who receive subsidies will use them to help pay for off-campus child care, she said.

Harvard Professor Emeritus John T. Dunlop, the university's chief representative in the negotiations, said in a statement after the union won the election the university looked forward to a constructive relationship with the new union.

"In these negotiations the university has been sensitive to the significant changes that are taking place in the labor force of America, and in the Boston area, that will vitally impact the university in the 1990s," Dunlop said. "We want to be ahead of events in these areas, and we believe the agreement will materially help us to prepare for the long future."

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CASE STUDY: New York State Employees

Many New York state employees can bring their children to work under an agreement between the CSEA and the state that has created the largest statewide day care program in the nation.

After New York opened the first state-operated day care center in 1979, CSEA negotiated creation of the Work-Site Childcare Initiative, a program that now includes 39 day care centers serving about 2,600 children around the state.

New Child Care Centers

In its 1988-91 contract with the state, CSEA and five other unions negotiated a record $16.6 million for the child care centers, including 12 new facilities expected to open in the next several years. Several of the new centers will remain open in the evening or later to accommodate children whose parents work evening and night shifts.

The child care center system is the most prominent of numerous work and family benefits negotiated by state employee unions and New York in recent years. These benefits led *Money* magazine in 1985 to call the state one of best employers for working parents in the nation.

The child care center system is the most prominent of numerous work and family benefits negotiated by state employee unions and New York in recent years.

Other Benefits

Union-won benefits include job sharing, flexitime, voluntary work reduction programs, and alternative work schedules. In addition, a dependent care assistance plan to help workers pay for child care or elder care with pretax dollars will begin next year, state officials told BNA.

"Unions began to realize that you did not just negotiate for the individual worker," said Irene Carr, statewide secretary for CSEA Local 1000 of AFCSME. "The worker affects the family, and the family affects the worker."

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The union later was joined in the child care negotiations by the Public Employees Federation (PEF), Council 82 of AFSCME, District Council 37 of AFSCME, the United University Professions, and the Policemen's Benevolent Association.

Child Care Top Concern

A survey of union members found that high-quality, affordable child care ranked near the top among their concerns.

Child care "is probably the easiest thing we negotiate...It's a win-win situation for both sides."

"The demand has proven there is a real need" for child care, said Howard Shafer, vice president of PEF. "We don't go with programs our members don't want."

The fact that a child care network would help the state and the union led to smooth negotiations on the issue, according to Ronald Tarwater, director of the division of public information for the Governor's Office of Employee Relations.

Child care "is probably the easiest thing we negotiate," he told BNA. "It's a win-win situation for both sides."

Centers Located at Work Sites

Most of the day care centers are located at state work sites, allowing workers in state office buildings to bring their children when they come to work. Many employees' offices are only a few doors from where their children spend the day and many workers visit them during the lunch hour. Union members say such an arrangement gives them peace of mind and allows them to concentrate on their work.

Before the center at Empire State Plaza in Albany opened, Jim Palmateer, a transportation analyst, had to leave his son Matthew, now 11, at a babysitter an hour's drive from his job.

"I found it difficult not to worry about him all day," Palmateer recalled. He and his wife have since enrolled their other son, Ian, 3, in the center. "Now I can concentrate without worrying about my family," Palmateer said. "It sets my mind at ease."

Some parents feel that the centers charge too much. Fees are based on parents' incomes, a criterion upon which CSEA insisted in negotiations, and they range from $45 to $110 a week per child, ex-

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plained Deborah Miller, employee program associate in the New York employee relations office.

Charges vary widely because each center sets its own fee scale, based on local operating costs, Miller said. A family in Binghamton with an annual income of $40,000 pays $94 a week for each child enrolled in a center, whereas the center in Elmira would charge the same family $55, Miller said.

All of the centers accept children between the ages of 8 weeks and 5 years, and some offer kindergarten, summer school, and after-school care for 6- to 9-year-olds.

Grants Defer Costs

Because the unions were concerned about the centers' rising fees, in the latest round of bargaining they got the state to establish a grants program to help defray rising operating costs, a move designed to stabilize tuition fees. Previously, the centers based their budgets on the fees that they charged, Miller said.

Despite the increasing costs, a reputation for high-quality care has made the centers extremely popular with parents, and long waiting lists are common at many of them, Miller said. Many parents register their children for openings before the children are born, but the state says it probably never will have enough centers to meet the demand. New York is examining the possibility of working with business to open more centers, Tarwater said.

In the meantime, the new funds also will be used to establish the 12 new centers around the state. Grants of $40,000 will be given to joint local labor-management committees to set up centers for 30 children each, and an additional $500 per child will be available for committees that plan to start larger centers. Funds also will be available to provide child care workers with health insurance or individual retirement accounts, Miller said.

Many parents register their children for openings before the children are born, but the state says it probably never will have enough centers to meet the demand.

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CASE STUDY: Postal Workers

Changes in the types of benefits its members needed prompted the Syracuse, N.Y., postal workers union to look beyond its traditional bargaining role to solve a growing problem for workers: the lack of quality child care available at all hours of the day and night.

After national contract negotiations between the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) and the U.S. Postal Service produced an agreement for a pilot child care program, the Syracuse local of APWU and locals of the other unions joined with management officials in the fall of 1988 to launch the first on-site child care facility in the nation at a postal facility.

"It's not just how much money we can squeeze out of [management] anymore...A lot of our members are interested in the more intangible benefits."

Non-Monetary Benefits

The center, planned with the unusual working hours of postal employees in mind, represents what the union sees as a major new thrust for organized labor across the country: providing members with benefits that do not always show up in their paycheck.

"It's not just how much money we can squeeze out of [management] anymore," APWU Central New York Local President Howard Evans told BNA. "A lot of our members are interested in the more intangible benefits."

Extended Hours

Postal workers at the 1,000-employee facility and its numerous branches often had difficulty arranging child care because of their odd working hours. Employees can be assigned one of three shifts: 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.; 3 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.; or 10:30 p.m. to 7 a.m., and some workers have shifts that overlap these hours. Most new employees work the overnight shift, Evans said.

As a result, many working parents, especially those just hired and at the bottom of the seniority ladder, needed child care in the evening hours or through the night, he added.

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Management also was concerned about the problem, as many qualified applicants had to turn down jobs because few of them who had children could work nights unless child care was available, Mary Beth Frost, a postal operations technician at the facility, told BNA.

"Some [applicants] found they couldn't accept a job here, because when you start, you have to work nights. No ifs, ands, or buts about it," she said.

National Union Involvement

APWU national headquarters lent its Syracuse local $7,000 for the center, and the Postal Service donated space and between $10,000 and $15,000 to pay for renovation of the space that houses the center, Evans said. The APWU local held numerous bake sales and charity softball games to help pay for the project. Following several months of renovation work, the unions and management in September 1988 opened "Little Eagles," a child care center open from 6 a.m. Sundays through midnight Saturdays.

The 1,600-square-foot center, equipped with cots, toys, and games, has become a popular addition to the post office, Evans said, and meetings of its board often attract more workers than union meetings.

"Some [applicants] found they couldn't accept a job here, because when you start, you have to work nights. No ifs, ands, or buts about it."

Non-Profit Organization

The board comprises six officers elected by the parents, a postal supervisor, and one representative each from the APWU, the NALC, the Mail Handlers Division of the Laborers International Union of North America, and the postmaster's office. The board hired a child-care provider to operate the center after incorporating it as a non-profit corporation.

About 65 children are enrolled in the center, 50 full-time. Some 33 attend during the day, 12 during the evening shift, and six on Saturdays.

"It's worked out wonderful for me," said day-shift clerk-stenographer Barbara Rogers, whose 11-month-old son, Kevin, has attended the center for eight months. "I was very fortunate. The whole thing came about when I was pregnant," Rogers told BNA. The cen-

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The post office center's fees meet most of its overhead expenses, although several fund raisers are planned to update or replace equipment.

ter is down the hall from Rogers' work station, and this enables her to nurse and play with Kevin during her lunch hour.

Night Shift Under-Utilized

The center had been open throughout the night, but so few parents brought their children during the overnight shift that the board recently voted to close it at midnight, Evans said.

Many parents who work night shifts elected to use other child-care arrangements, such as having a relative take care of their children, because they found that bringing their children to the center for the night shift was too taxing on the youngsters, Evans explained.

Some parents "had to wake their child up to come to work at 10:30 and wake them up again at seven when they went home," he added.

However, several parents recently expressed renewed interest in overnight hours, prompting the board to reconsider its action, Evans said. The board may open the facility to the public at night to make it worthwhile to keep it open, he added.

Lower Rates

The center charges $65 a week for children over 18 months old and $68 for those who are younger. Parents pay $60 for each additional child. Other public and private centers in the Syracuse area charge between $75 to $100 a week per child, according to Evans.

The post office center's fees meet most of its overhead expenses, although several fund raisers are planned to update or replace equipment, he noted. The Postal Service provides the center's space rent-free, Evans added.

Several other APWU locals in other parts of the country are considering establishing child care centers similar to the one in Syracuse, or are providing other types of child care assistance, national officials of the union say. Union and management officials in San Francisco have contracted with a local child care center to reserve openings slots for post office workers' children, including overnight care when needed.

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Child care referral services are being contemplated by a local in New York City, and several others around the nation are considering other benefits such as dependent care spending accounts and holding parenting seminars, in addition to starting a child care center, national APWU spokeswoman Dorothy Campbell told BNA.

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CASE STUDY: Colorado Grocery Workers

Grocery store workers in Grand Junction, Colo., had a particularly difficult time arranging child care because they often work late hours and frequently change shifts.

In 1987, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 7 decided to open what was perhaps the first union-operated child care center in the United States.

Union-Operated Center

"The center is doing extremely well and parents' reaction to Local 7 of UFCW getting involved in child care has been very positive."

The center has been operating at near-capacity since, providing parents with care at a cost lower than the average for comparable services in the Grand Junction area, according to Bette Neuschwanger, director of national operations and communications for the 19,000-member union.

"The center is doing extremely well and parents' reaction to Local 7 of UFCW getting involved in child care has been very positive," Neuschwanger told BNA. "It shows that unions are looking to serve their members and the community in other ways."

The union has found that operating a child care center is challenging, with staff having to be hired, bills paid, and the building maintained, Neuschwanger acknowledged.

"We did not know how complex child care operations were," she said, noting that the union knew little about the subject before it got involved in the Grand Junction venture.

Different Shifts

The union paid $250,000 for a 60-year-old school building in 1986 and convinced several other unions to help renovate it. The 6,000-square-foot center opened in March 1987 and has an average daily attendance of about 77 children for each grocery store work shift, Neuschwanger said. Total enrollment is about 180, with different children attending the center at various times of the day and week, she explained.

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The center accepts children ages two to 10, and charges $43.25 a week per child, a third less than similar centers in Denver, which is about 250 miles to the southeast, and slightly less than those in Grand Junction, Neuschwanger said. The fees cover all of the center's operating costs, she added.

Assorted Programs

The center includes a computer learning room and it sponsors summer swim sessions and after-school programs. The center's hours are perhaps its most attractive feature for parents: 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

"The biggest benefit for me is the Saturday care," said Melinda Vollrath, a customer relations manager at City Market who works every Saturday and has two children who attend the center. "Most child care centers are not open Saturdays."

The union has no plans to open child care centers elsewhere because they are too expensive to establish and operate, Neuschwanger said.

However, the union is starting to provide other, less-costly child care services elsewhere in Colorado and Wyoming.

"The center laid the groundwork for where we want to go in the rest of Colorado and Wyoming," Neuschwanger said. "Obviously it's too expensive to put [a child care center] on every corner."

Other Options

To help members in other locations in the two states solve their child care problems, the union is working with several grocery chains to establish voucher plans, referral services, and dependent care assistance plans.

"On-site child care is a wonderful idea ... but there are some other options" for helping parents "without getting into the child care business," Neuschwanger said.

For example, the union and King Supers Inc., which operates a supermarket chain in the Denver area, recently surveyed workers to determine the need for child care services, Neuschwanger said. Many supermarkets are open 24 hours a day, but only one day care

"On-site child care is a wonderful idea ... but there are some other options" for helping parents "without getting into the child care business."

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center in the Denver area is open late at night, Mary Lynn Haufchild, King Supers employee services manager, told BNA.

Employee Survey

Haufchild said her firm conducted the survey in part to determine whether enough employees' children would attend a center during the night to merit keeping one open late or 24 hours a day. If the survey indicates sufficient support for nighttime center hours, the company will use the results to try to convince center operators to stay open late, she explained.

The union is working with employers outside of the collective bargaining process because it believes increased child care benefits would help all parents, whether unionized or not, and because working for high-quality, affordable child care may attract new members to the union, Neuschwanger said.

"The only times people hear about labor unions is in times of stress or strikes," she said. "Anything we can do to improve labor's image" is welcome.

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CASE STUDY: Santa Clara County

The "three o'clock syndrome" – parents' concern about their latchkey children – is no longer a malady of Santa Clara, County., Calif., employees who are using an innovative program established by their union and the county in conjunction with a struggling local school district and the YWCA.

After a survey found that many of its members needed high-quality before- and after-school care for their children, Local 715 of the SEIU, the county, the YWCA, and a school district near a major county office complex reached a unique agreement in 1984 that allowed a public elementary school to be used for day care.

Unique Agreement

In exchange for the use of the school, the union and the county agreed to encourage parents whose children attend the center to enroll their children in the school, thus raising enrollment and preserving much-needed state aid.

Under California law, state education aid is based on enrollment, and enrollment at Orchard Park School in San Jose was falling, threatening the school's existence.

Partly as a result of the agreement to open the day care center, enrollment at the school has grown from about 200 five years ago to almost 350, according to Mary Lou Garcia, director of the day care program.

As a result of establishing the center, today union members need no longer worry about what their children are doing before and after school, the elementary school remains open, and the county supports a family benefit that met its criteria of not adding to its budget (the center is self-supporting).

"We believe that the union doesn't stop when you're done bargaining for wages," said Jeb Mays, senior field representative for the 10,000-member local, which also has won from the county a job-sharing clause, alternate work schedules, the right to use sick leave take care of sick children or relatives, and other work and family benefits.

As a result of establishing the center, today union members need no longer worry about what their children are doing before and after school...

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"We are prepared to go to the wall" in negotiations for work and family benefits, Mays said. "They are not just put on the table to be fluff until you get down to the nitty-gritty. They are the nitty-gritty."

Before- and After-School Activities

The day care program begins at 6:30 a.m., when parents heading for work begin dropping their children off at the center. The children can participate in arts and crafts, operate a computer, play a piano, or play with toys until school starts at 8:15, Garcia said.

The evening program begins when students are dismissed at 2:35 p.m. Older students go outside to play while the younger ones are given a snack and then take part in theme activities. For example, they recently read about and dressed up as monsters, Garcia said. The older students are invited later for a snack, before the center closes at 6 p.m.

The center, operated by the local YWCA, charges $23 a week for children in the morning program, $40 for those in the evening program, and $45 a week for those who attend both, Garcia said. Thirty children are enrolled in the morning program and 55 in the afternoon, she added.

"The center was great," said union member Cheri Compton, whose two children were enrolled in it. "Especially having it close to my work site and especially as a single parent. It gave the kids and me time in the car at the end of the day."

"We are prepared to go to the wall" in negotiations for work and family benefits..."They are not just put on the table to be fluff until you get down to the nitty-gritty. They are the nitty-gritty."

Bargaining for Family Benefits

In many cases, Mays said bargaining with the county for work and family benefits has been more difficult than bargaining for salary increases. "We have gotten some resistance," she said. County officials have "been cautious about expanding benefits."

Mays said the local has persevered and told the county that work and family issues are priorities for its members.

County officials say they realize that helping workers cope with the stress of having a family helps the county in the long run because such assistance enables employees to give 100 percent on the job.

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The before- and after-school program also reduces the amount of time students are unsupervised, and can reduce drug or alcohol abuse and other types of juvenile delinquency, Peter Kutras, director of labor relations for the county, observed.

"We're trying to take a global view" of the benefits that can be gained from effective work and family programs, he said.

The county is exploring the possibility of opening a child care center across from San Jose's civic center.

Local 715 wants the county to open centers for children who are sick, centers for infant care, and centers for children of parents who work evening hours, Mays said.

"People are pretty much left on their own at this point" in arranging such care, she said.

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APPENDIX

TEXT OF FAMILY CARE PROVISIONS OF AT&T LABOR CONTRACT

On May 28 American Telephone & Telegraph Co. reached a new three-year collective bargaining agreement with its two largest unions, the Communications Workers of America and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The agreement was hailed by both sides as a pace-setter in the area of family care.

What follows is an exact reprinting of the tentative agreement's family care provisions. Highlights of these provisions include the creation of child and elder care programs, leave to enable workers to care for seriously ill family members, and adoption assistance.

FAMILY CARE

In recognition of the emerging need of employees with regard to child care and the care of elderly dependents, the Company and the Union agree to phase in, over the life of the Memorandum of Understanding, the following new programs:

Child Care

Effective January 1, 1990, for regular full-time and regular part-time employees, a national community-based Child Care Resource and Referral Service (CCRS) will be engaged by the Company to help employees locate, evaluate and manage quality child care for children under the age of 13. This service will be provided by a professional organization charged with the responsibility of locating existing services and, if necessary, canvassing for new providers of child-care service. Information concerning costs, hours of operation, location, transportation and curriculum will be provided to employees via a dial-up contact number. The Company will pay the costs associated with establishing and operating the nationwide CCRS. The selection of the child-care provider and associated costs for the services of the provider will be the responsibility of the employee.

Elder Care

Effective January 1, 1991, for regular full-time and regular part-time employees, an Elder Care Resource and Referral Service (ECRS) will be engaged by the Company to help employees locate, evaluate and manage quality care for relatives sixty (60) years of age or older. This service, also to be provided nationwide through community-based professional organizations, will provide information on elder care facilities, housing, health, Medicare, and transportation services to employees via a dial-up contact number. In addition, the service organization will attempt to stimulate the development of new service providers as well as the expansion of existing facilities and will provide care-giver seminars and consumer information materials. The Company will assume the costs associated with establishing and operating the nationwide ECRS. The selection of the elder care service and associated costs for its use will be the responsibility of the employee.

Dependent Care Reimbursement Accounts

Effective January 1, 1990, a Dependent Care Reimbursement Account (DCRA) feature will be adopted that will allow regular full-time and regular part-time employees to exempt up to $5,000 wages a year from federal income and social security taxes. The amount of the exemption varies depending on the employee's IRS filing status. However, for purposes of determining pension, savings plan, life insurance, or death benefits, an employee's wages shall be determined as if such amount had not been dedicated to the reimbursement account.

To qualify for an exemption under Internal Revenue Service regulations, an employee's decisions regarding contributions for care and the amount to be set aside in the account must be made prior to each plan year. Those decisions are irrevocable for the applicable year unless there is a change in the employee's family status. At the end of the plan year, unused amounts will be forfeited by the employee and will go into a separate fund, the corpus of which will be credited to all program participants on a per capita basis provided the employee was a participant in the Plan during the year of the forfeiture.

This program will be established to set up employee accounts for the payment of qualified expenses incurred for dependent children under age thirteen (13) and may also be used for elder care so long as the employee provides more than 50 percent of the elder dependent's support and the elder dependent is incapable of self-care.

Qualified expenses are those set forth in the IRS Regulations but, in general are expenses used to provide care for the child or elder dependent and allows the employee or spouse of the employee to work. The care may take place inside or outside the employee's home, but elder care outside the home qualifies only if the elder dependent spends at least eight hours a day in the employee's home. Nursing home expenses are not eligible for reimbursement from the employee's account.

Under the Program, when an employee incurs a qualified expense, he/she may file a claim for reimbursement and will receive a check from the account for the amount of the expense. Statements as to the status of individual accounts will be provided to each participating employee at least quarterly. The DCRA shall be operated and administered by the Company or its designated agent in a manner consistent with governing tax and other legal considerations.

AT&T Family Care Development Fund

The Company and the Unions agree that additional funding may be required for family care programs to address evolving needs. Accordingly, the Company agrees to make available, over the life of the Memorandum of Understanding, five million dollars to fund projects and initiatives that foster an increase in the number or expand the capabilities of qualified pro-

fessional organizations to serve the child and elder care needs of Communications Workers of America (CWA) and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) represented employees throughout AT&T. These funds will be used to encourage that increase, enhance the quality of supply and increase the number of community options. A joint Company/Union Board composed of one (1) member from each union and two (2) from the Company, shall review proposals and direct funds to selected local community programs. Funds may be made available for such purposes as training of care providers, start-up loans for care centers, planning grants to community agencies and matching funds for federal or state grants to non-profit organizations that foster family care programs.

Improved Care of Newborn Child Leave

Effective January 1, 1990, the Care of Newborn Child Leave shall be modified to incorporate the following improvements:

The leave for care of a newborn or adopted child is without pay and shall, subject to applicable benefit committee approval, be for a period of up to one year. The employee shall be guaranteed reinstatement to the same or equivalent job at the end of the leave. An employee who wishes to change his/her return date may request the change and the company will endeavor to accommodate the request. While on leave, benefit coverage for eligible employees shall, to the extent provided to active employees, be as follows:

Death Benefit – Company pays for the period of the leave (up to one year).

Basic Group Life Insurance – Company pays premium for the period of the leave (up to one year).

Medical Expense Plan/HMO – Company pays for the first six (6) months. Employee covers the balance.

Dental/DMO – Company pays for the first six (6) months. Employee covers the balance.

Supplementary Group Life Insurance and Dependent Group Life Insurance – Employee covers the premiums.

Sickness Disability – Available after the leave if the employee is disabled at the end of the leave.

Family Care Leave

Effective January 1, 1990, the Company will introduce a Family Care Leave that shall be administered as follows:

The Family Care Leave is without pay and shall, subject to applicable benefit committee approval, be for a total of up to twelve (12) months within a two-year period. The employee shall be guaranteed reinstatement at the end of each segment of the leave.

The purpose of the leave shall be to care for a seriously ill family member.

For purposes of this leave, "family member" shall mean:

Spouse.

Biological or adopted unmarried child under nineteen (19) years of age [or age twenty-three (23) if a full-time student] or an unmarried child of any age who is incapable of self-support; or physically or mentally handicapped and fully dependent on the employee.

Biological or adoptive parent or parent-in-law; grandparent or grandparent-in-law.

The employee shall be required to present evidence of serious illness of a family member and the expected duration of the illness and the reason for the employee's involvement, to the satisfaction of the Company.

While on leave, benefit coverage for eligible employees shall, to the extent provided to active employees, be as follows:

Death Benefit – Company continues coverage for the period of the leave (up to one year).

Basic Group Life Insurance – Company pays the premium for the period of the leave (up to one year).

Medical Expense Plan/HMO – Company pays the premium for the first six (6) months. The employee covers the balance.

Dental/DMO – Company pays for the first six (6) months. The employee covers the balance.

Supplementary Group Life Insurance and Dependent Group Life Insurance – Employee covers the premiums.

Sickness Disability – Available after the leave if the employee is disabled at the end of the leave.

Adoption Assistance

Effective January 1, 1990, regular full and part-time employees will be eligible for reimbursement up to a maximum of $2,000 for expenses associated with the legal adoption of a minor child [under (18) years of age].

These expenses, which will be approved provided they are not otherwise covered under other AT&T benefit plans, and provided further that they are directly connected to the adoption process, include agency fees, court costs, and necessary medical and legal fees.❑

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The February 1989 Work & Family Report #14, *Sick Child Care: Employers' Prescriptions for the 1990s* (BSP 140), describes specific sick child day care services developed by employers to meet the needs of working parents, including a new trend toward in-hospital care facilities.

The March 1989 Work & Family Report #15, *The DOL Women's Bureau Work and Family Clearinghouse: An Information Resource for Employers* (BSP 146), describes a federal operation established in January 1989 to provide employers with information on such work and family issues as child care, part-time or emergency care programs, and alternative work schedules.

The April 1989 Work & Family Report #16, *The "Mommy Track" Debate and Beyond: Public Policy? Corporate Reality?* (BSP 156), contains the transcript of a two-hour roundtable discussion on career tracks for women by Felice Schwartz and nine other experts representing corporate, academic, and public interests.

The May 1989 Work & Family Report #17, *Child Day Care in the 101st Congress: Early Initiatives* (BSP 157), features an in-depth comparison of six of the more than 100 bills with child care provisions introduced in the 101st Congress.

The June 1989 Work & Family Report #18, *The 1990s Father: Balancing Work & Family Concerns* (BSP 159), takes a look at how employers are responding to their male employees' increasing involvement in family concerns and the types of programs available to working fathers.

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